MESSAGE PRIORITIZATION AND BUFFERING IN A LIMITED NETWORK

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method for prioritizing and proactively buffering messages in a messaging system (10) with limited network resources, such as intermittent or unreliable communications links, or limited storage capacity. Messages, either in whole or in separate elements such as a header and a body, are assigned a prioritization value from factors such as the service level of the sender and recipient, the probability that the recipient will access a particular receiving node, the type of message element, and the age of the message. Messages are identified with the highest prioritization value, and these messages are delivered to a receiving node until the limited resource is exhausted. This may be used to optimize the use of a limited resource in a messaging system (10), increasing the probability that important messages will be available at the messaging nodes (14) from which they are requested. Combined with proactive buffering, messages can be delivered to a destination, such as a portable messaging unit (40), from messaging nodes (14) without reliable communications with a central server (12).